

NVDA Town Plan Review Committee Hearing Minutes
Regional Approval of Canaan Town Plan
Wednesday, April 30, 2025 at 6:00 P.M.
Canaan Town Offices, 318 Christian Hill, Canaan Village

From Town Plan Review Committee: Mike Metcalf, Greensboro

NVDA Staff: Alison Low

Representing Canaan: Mike Dailey and Dylan Begin, Canaan Selectboard; Zachary Brown, Canaan Town Clerk

Prior to the opening of the hearing at 6:00, Alison Low explained the purpose of the hearing, which was to receive public comment on a request to regionally approve the local plan as per 24 V.S.A. §4350. She mentioned that the staff review was already completed and found that all the required elements were present and that the Canaan Town Plan was consistent with the State planning goals in 24 VSA 4302 and compatible with other plans of the region. She also noted that the review committee would receive comment and pose questions in this public hearing (the hearing is required by statute). Recommendation for approval of the Canaan Plan must be approved by the full board, and they meet next on June 19, June at the East Side Restaurant in Newport City. Canaan representatives are always welcome to attend board meetings, but it is not mandatory.

Mike Metcalf asked local officials if the Canaan Plan was a minor rewrite, or an entirely new plan. It was noted that it was by and large an entirely new plan that included issues such as priority habitat blocks (which was a new requirement in statute.) The planning process included a community survey, where respondents were asked to indicate which initiatives they could support with their time and efforts. Mike Metcalf indicated that he appreciated that question and how it was reflected in the implementation section of the plan by highlights.

Paul Brouha, another Town Plan Review Committee member was unable to attend in person, but he read the plan and offered written comment. These were read in the hearing. “As Governor Scott would say what Canaan needs is taxpayers. The crux of the plan boils down to the second paragraph on page 26 which begins with ‘With the outspoken need of housing, we’ll-paying jobs, and working families to fill them, a planned coordinated effort is required to address these needs.’ A replacement for the lost Ethan Allen jobs will be required to power out of the “retirement community” that the town has become. It’s a great place to live if you’ve got your own money, it seems. I really like the way the plan is organized and written—your consultant did a great job. Also the color-codes for the responsible entities is very helpful.”

The aging demographic statewide was discussed in the hearing. Family sizes are getting smaller, necessitating a change in housing stock.

There was a question about relations with Canada, and how that may have changed. There is border patrolling that takes place with state police throughout the year. The border control station actually has reduced staffing. About 60% of Wallace Pond is in Canada. It was noted that a major energy development (which is why the plan was written for substantial deference under Act 174) is currently on hold, possibly due to tense relations.

Mike Metcalf asked the Town about their immediate needs. The Town of Canaan does not participate in the NEK Waste Management District due to higher costs of hauling. (They maintain their own Solid Waste Management Plan.) They were taking their glass to a facility in New Hampshire, which

has currently stopped taking the glass because they have no market. The Town of Canaan wants to remain in compliance with State of Vermont universal recycling requirements, and they are looking at getting a glass pulverizer. They have sufficient space in their two-bay garage, but the pulverizer will cost about \$20,000, and they'll need a skid steer loader. They feel that there is a market for pulverized glass – sand can be used for roads and landscaping – so they are reaching out to various entities to identify potential funding sources. They shared this list of potential funding sources with Alison Low, who indicated that they would share this list with others.

Mike Metcalf indicated that the recommendation to approve the Canaan Town Plan would come before the board meeting, with a recommendation from committee and staff to approve.

The hearing closed at 6:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Alison Low